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Study of the poetry of Howard McKinley Corning

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A STUDY
of
THE POETRY
of
HOWARD McKINLEY CORNING

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Howard McKinley Corning was born October 23, 1896. When he was three years old his family moved from their farm near Lincoln, Nebraska, to Ohio, where they lived until 1919. During the twenty years he lived in Ohio, the poet's schooling was limited because of ill health, a factor which may, in part at least, account for the strained diction of his earlier poems, in which an over-compensation for lack of education can be detected in the frequent use of polysyllabic words when shorter words would be more appropriate.[1]

From Ohio Corning moved to Oregon, lived a few months at Salem and then settled in Portland, where he has lived since. Although he taught and did research work for the Portland Center of The State System of Higher Education, his profession for many years was that of a florist, during which time he worked in his brother's greenhouses. At present he is engaged in historical research as a staff member of the Oregon Historical Society.[2]

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[1] See Chapter IV below.

[2] Alfred Powers, History of Oregon Literature (Portland, Oregon: Metropolitan Press, 1935), pp. 643-44. For the information that Corning worked for his brother and that his present occupation is with the Oregon Historical Society, this writer is indebted to Doctor Harold G. Merriam, Chairman of the Department of English, Montana State University, a personal friend of Mr. Corning.

Corning's writing includes short stories, critical studies, book reviews,[3] and articles on Oregon history[4] as well as poetry. His poems have appeared in such periodicals as Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, The Saturday Review of Literature, American Mercury, Christian Century, Commonweal, Literary Digest, Frontier and Midland, Nation, and New Republic, among others. Selected poems have been included in eight anthologies and compilations,[5] and two collections of his poems have been published: These People in 1926 and The Mountain in the Sky in 1930.

Corning's poetry is among the best to come from the Northwest to date.[6] It is the purpose of this thesis to analyze the poetry contained in his two published collections, which are representative of his total output, from the standpoints of prosody, imagery, diction, and subject matter to determine how well Corning has synthesized the materials he found in Oregon into poetry and to evaluate the worth of that poetry.

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[3] Powers, op. cit., p. 643.

[4] See the Oregon Historical Quarterly for June, 1946, and June, 1947.

[5] Powers, op. cit., p. 644.

[6] For representative selections of poetry by Northwest poets, see Harold G. Merriam, ed., Northwest Verse, an Anthology (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1931).

CHAPTER II

PROSODY

In the interests of simplicity, the discussion of prosody is divided into four parts: form, rime, meter, and onomatopoeia, even though these elements cannot be sufficiently divorced from each other to eliminate repetition entirely.

FORM

Although the setting for nearly all of Corning's poetry is either the wild, unsettled mountains or the rural agricultural areas of Oregon, the form of his verse displays little of the freedom usually associated with life close to nature. The poet shows a marked preference for the discipline of regular stanzaic form, meter, and rime; of the one hundred and three poems[1] included in the two volumes under discussion, only six can be said to be written in free verse. The single form most frequently utilized is that of the Shakesperian sonnet. In other words, thirty-seven or more than one-third of the one hundred and three poems are sonnets.[2]

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[1] Counting the individual sonnets of sonnet sequences as individual poems.

[2] See Appendix A.

His next favorite form is that of the four-line stanza riming abab, which is found in thirty-four poems. The most frequent meter is that of the tetrameter line, which occurs in eighteen of these poems. Five other poems contain the four-line stanza with rime schemes other than abab.[3]

Of the remaining poems, six are written in eight-line stanzas riming ababcdcd, two are written in six-line stanzas riming ababab, two are written in rimed couplets, four are written in miscellaneous stanzaic forms, six in free verse, and one in blank verse. Of the remaining poems, four are undivided into stanzas, and five are divided into stanzas of unequal length.[4]

This preference for conventional form is not always fortunate. The poet's determination to compress his subject matter into conventional forms has at times resulted in diction which is so out of keeping with the theme that the reader is aware of the disharmony between thought and expression.[5] Even when the diction is not faulty the reader cannot sometimes help wondering if certain sonnets might not have been more successful had they been written with greater freedom of form, especially those narrative sonnets which

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[3] See Appendix B.

[4] See Appendix C.

[5] See Chapter IV below.

tell a story rather than concentrate on a single emotion or experience.[6] Although he has occasionally in his sonnets achieved an excellent unity and intensity of expression, an excellence which places them among his best work,[7] others are too vague or general in their statements to provoke an emotional reaction in the reader, a weakness that might have been avoided had the poems been cast into a form which would have given the writer greater freedom of expression.[8]

Fortunately, the poet's tendency is progressively toward the greater freedom of form that more nearly approximates the unregimented characteristics of his settings. The Mountain in the Sky, the second volume to be published, contains nearly all the poems that do not conform to a regular metrical pattern, rime scheme, or stanzaic form,[9] and the increased freshness and greater authenticity of these later poems is quickly apparent when they are compared to the poems of the first volume.[10]

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[6] "Flame and Water," These People (New York: Harold Vinal, 1926), p. 9; "Six Curtains," The Mountain in the Sky (Portland, Oregon: Metropolitan Press, 1930), pp. 77-79.

[7] "Rustic," These People, op. cit., p. 45; "Pruning Vines," The Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 8.

[8] "Waylaid," These People, op. cit., p. 30; "Sonnet," p. 70; "The Proudest Heart," p. 76.

[9] See Appendixes A, B, and C.

[10] Especially noteworthy in these respects are "A Drift of Oregon Bluejays," The Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 7; "Joaquin Miller Crosses the Mountains," pp. 19-23;

RIME

As has already been noted, the sonnets appear most frequently with the Shaksperian rime scheme.[11] Of the remaining fifteen sonnets, three are written in the manner of Wyatt,[12] and two are written in the Petrarchan form.[13] The remaining ten sonnets have eight rime schemes, two of which are duplicated once each.[14] However, although there are eleven variations of rime scheme to be found in the sonnets, the octave never varies from three patterns.[15] More variety is found in the sestet, which has nine arrangements of rime.[16]

In the poems written in a regular stanzaic form, the poet displays a preference for a limited number of rimes. The rimes of the short stanzas are of necessity limited, but the ten-line stanza is limited to four rimes,[17] the six-line

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"Solitary Boatman," p. 47; "Wilderness Dayfall," p. 53; and "Return of Two Natives," pp. 63-71.

[11] ababcdcd efefgg.

[12] Riming abbaabba cddcee.

[13] Riming abbaabba cdecde.

[14] Those duplicated are: abbacddc effegg and abbacddc efefgg.

[15] ababcdcd, abbaabba, and abba cddc.

[16] efeggf, efefef, efgfge, efegfg, efefgg, cddcee, cdecde, effegg, and efgefg. See Appendix A.

[17] "Three Sons," These People, op. cit., pp. 38-40; stanza riming abbacddebd.

stanza is limited to two rimes,[18] and the seven-line stanza is also limited to two rimes.[19] However, in those poems undivided into stanzas and those divided into stanzas of unequal length, the poet is much less inclined to limit the number of rimes.[20]

Noteworthy is Corning's preference for masculine rime. Even a cursory glance at the rimes of his poems is sufficient to show that the great preponderance of rime comes in monosyllabic words that nearly always receive the natural accent of the rhythm as well as the emphasis they have as single words. Even polysyllabic words usually have the accent on the last syllable, and feminine rime occurs most frequently in words containing the tion or ing suffix, or words ending in er, such as daughter, river, water, rover, sober.

The writer makes no conscious effort to employ alliteration or assonance for poetic effect. Although both devices are found in his poems, they appear to be incidental. True assonance is almost completely absent. His nearest approach is in the near rimes occasionally found in which

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[18] "Mountain Men," ibid., p. 31; and "Elegy for a Mountain Boy," pp. 55-57; stanza riming ababab.

[19] "Chant for the Brethren of Dust," Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., pp. 73-74; stanza riming abaabab.

[20] See Appendix C.

the variance is due to a slight difference in the vowel sound or the consonants.[21] Although the poet does not elaborate his verse with internal rime, imperfect rime, or identical rime, his choice of riming words is competent and effective.

METER

Just as in form and rime Corning has definite preferences which he utilizes much more frequently than others, so does he show a marked preference for certain meters. The sonnets, of course, are written in iambic pentameter, although in a few instances he does not adhere strictly to that meter.[22]

Appendix B shows clearly the poet's early preference for the tetrameter line and his more imaginative use of meter in the second volume. In The Mountain in the Sky the dimeter, trimeter, and irregular line appear much more frequently than either the pentameter or tetrameter line. He also combines lines of varying lengths to produce new rhythms. The result

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[21] Examples are "blood" rimed with "stood;" "earth" rimed with "hearth;" "devised" rimed with "Christ." The poet's greatest deviation from true rime is found in "Rails for a Calf," Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., pp. 15-16, in which he rimes "hills" with "rails."

[22] See, for example, These People, op. cit.: "Ballantine Harvey," p. 34, and "Autumnal Gesture," p. 48; and The Mountain in the Sky, op. cit.: "On Cedars Dammed Across a River's Course," p. 52, and "The Last Hound," p. 106.

is a greater virility in the poems of the second volume, a virility that preserves the freshness, seizes the reader's imagination, and increases the general effectiveness of that volume. There is also evidence of greater ingenuity in the later poems as evidenced by the combination of a variety of feet within a single line. In These People, the foot of a line, excluding occasional variations caused by the insertion of unstressed syllables, is consistent throughout, usually the iambic foot. In The Mountain in the Sky, feet of different lengths are combined with excellent results:

> The creak/ of lea/ther, the grind,
> Of ox-/ cart wheels,/ the despair
> Of trails/ that led/ them to find
> What was/n't there.[23]

ONOMATOPOEIA

The use of onomatopoeia, beyond the use of such words as "thunder," "rumble," "hum," "buzz," "clank," et cetera, is extremely limited. A rather subtle approach to onomatopoeia is found in "Willamette Portage,"[24] in the repetition of the name, "Medorem Crawford." The reiteration of that name in every stanza, which in itself sounds somewhat

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[23] The Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 3. See also in the same volume: "River Tree," p. 9; "Handspan," p. 11, "Willamette Portage," pp. 17-18, and others.

[24] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

like the murmur of a rapid stream, brings the noise of the river into the poem, forming a background for the poet's speculation. A more definite use of onomatopoeia is found in "Squirrels in the House of the Night,"[25] "Rat-a-tat-tat" is repeated several times to suggest the noise made by the supposed squirrels, and the line, "Like a scatter of cones along dry shakes,"[26] strongly suggests the actual sound. In "Wilderness Dayfall"[27] the line, "And the crickety cessation from staccatto hammers" reproduces the sound of the croaking frogs quite effectively.

SUMMARY

Corning's favorite single form is that of the sonnet, which he often uses effectively, although it appears that he might have done well to use it less often than he does, since his settings and themes are not always in harmony with the regimentation of expression imposed by that form. In his other poems, he prefers the discipline of regular rime and meter, but the marked tendency toward increasing freedom of form is indicative of the poet's increasing familiarity with

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[25] Ibid., pp. 29-36.

[26] Ibid., p. 33.

[27] Ibid., p. 53.

his medium and mastery of it. Taken collectively, the poems contained in The Mountain in the Sky are superior to those in These People, mainly because they are less hampered by convention and are consequently fresher and more vigorous in expression.

CHAPTER III

IMAGERY

The imagery found in these poems is vivid and effective, marred only by infrequent lapses into the commonplace or trite. Although many of the images are taken from the weather and those universal elements of life which are not restricted to any region, such as flame, shadow, water, and death, they reflect the Oregon scene and have the freshness and vigor of those vast, sparsely settled tracts of land.

His most frequent references are to mountains and hills, rocks and stones, rivers and streams, forests and other uncultivated vegetation, and the earth itself. Wind, rain, and snow are often referred to as well as fog, clouds, lightning, and ice. His preoccupation with the sky and the astronomical universe is extensive. References to the sun, moon, and stars are so frequent that at times it seems he would lift his poetry to cosmic significance by tying it firmly to the cosmos itself.

His use of figures of speech other than simile, metaphor, and personification are limited. Only three times does he employ synesthesia; once when he writes of hearing "darkness sifting through from room to room,"[1] an application

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[1] The Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 30.

of a visual image to the sense of hearing; once when he speaks of the jaybird's cry as the unwinding of "his rusty spool upon the night,"[2] an application of an aural image to the sense of sight; and in "Mountain Nightfall," a poem written on the assumption that the approach of darkness in the mountains is audible as a faint rumble.[3] The use of synecdoche is likewise limited: "strident hoofs"[4] is used to designate a horse, "prong horns"[5] is used to designate a deer, and "copper wage"[6] is used to represent the world of commerce. Metonymy and allegory are not found.

SIMILE

Corning's expression becomes trite only in a few similes. His references to eyes like diamonds[7] or beetles,[8] weariness like lead,[9] and spring like a maiden[10] are

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[2] Ibid., p. 30.

[3] Ibid., p. 28.

[4] These People, op. cit., p. 3.

[5] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 70.

[6] Ibid., p. 73.

[7] Ibid., p. 66.

[8] Ibid., p. 77.

[9] Ibid., p. 19.

[10] These People, op. cit., p. 10.

sufficiently commonplace so that their use as figurative language fails to stimulate the reader's imagination. However, Corning also uses the simile with telling effect. In "Willamette Portage" he writes, "Your Spanish oxen sway and lumber/ Like shadows out of a moody slumber,"[11] a simile that grips the imagination and recalls the actual past in terms of eternal shadows, giving the reader a personal experience that better enables him to share the poet's reverie of a past event. The high incidence of soft and liquid sounds in the actual words also adds to the effect.

In "Squirrels in the House of the Night" the writer tells more about the house in a two-line simile than he does in many additional lines listing its detailed features when he says the roof "sagged and gave as if the spirit had let go within."[12] Houses have individual character to a greater extent than almost any other product of man, and in saying that the spirit had let go, the poet gives a vivid expression of the extent to which deterioration and desolation have overrun the building. In the same poem, Corning gives a striking account of the sensation he experienced in the house when he writes, "There was the throb of sightless, soundless breathing,/ As if I were feeling through the forms

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[11] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 17.

[12] Ibid., p. 30.

of flesh."[13] The sense of the eerie or supernatural is heightened by the incongruity of the comparison of breathing to feeling through the forms of flesh, a comparison which adds a touch of the macabre to the general atmosphere.

In the poem entitled "Advent" the poet uses the simile to give a sense of the pastoral idyl, writing that the "days wander over the hills like sheep."[14] Anyone who has ever watched the leisurely content of grazing sheep slowly nibbling their way over the hills could not fail to derive from that simile a sense of ease unmarred by conflict. In "The Redemption of Satan," Corning compares spiritual stimulation to "springs in cooling ferns" and "a cool and quiet stream."[15] Both similes by use of the word "cool" set themselves as antitheses to hot and strongly suggest the delightful sensation of immersion in cool water when one is overheated.

These similes, while not representative of every effect achieved with this figure, are typical and well illustrate an ability to condense within a few words a mood or sensation as well as the more common physical phenomena usually expressed in the simile.[16]

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[13] Ibid., p. 31.

[14] These People, op. cit., p. 12.

[15] Ibid., pp. 17, 20.

[16] Such as "three old ladies slim as hollyhocks," Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 77; or "pumpkins sprawl on the plain/ Like fallen moons," These People, op. cit., p. 48, which evoke little more than a mental picture.

METAPHOR

If Corning does not ever actually mix his metaphors, he does sometimes strain them. In the lines, "Theirs is the night of pearl and stalactite/ Closed in a green cocoon,"[17] the picture of the cave suggested by the words "pearl and stalactite" enclosed in a cocoon, which is usually associated with the minute insect world, is somewhat incongruous. However, he more than compensates for his rare lapses in such striking metaphors as "The shrill-voiced hounds of March/ Went baying the white wolves of Winter/ Back into the deep hills."[18] Into a single metapher he successfully compresses the whole stage of the seasonal cycles in which March with its warmer, blustering winds melts the snows of winter so that they gradually recede farther and farther into the hills and mountains.

If he does not always escape the commonplace metaphor, such as "Spring is a fluted song,"[19] he is capable of such images as "The lightning's rope/ Circling to draw the shadows back,"[20] and "The moon was a bull's horn piercing the sky,"[21]

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[17] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 10.

[18] These People, op. cit., p. 10.

[19] Ibid., p. 12.

[20] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 91.

[21] Ibid., p. 34.

metaphors redolent of Western culture as well as vivid statements of rather commonplace physical phenomena.

Corning sometimes extends his metaphors until they approach the metaphysical conceit. In "Time Is a Spade,"[22] "Spring's Plowshare,"[23] and "Rider to Hounds: Night,"[24] the metaphorical images of time as a spade, spring as a plowshare, and the night wind as a rider to hounds are sustained throughout. Corning's references to the wind as a "thin fluted and incoherent choir,"[25] to the renewed vegetation of spring as "sudden green" edging "its severing knife between/ The rock and cloud,"[26] and the path of a swallow's flight as an avenue of the air,[27] are additional illustrations of the freshness of his metaphors.

PERSONIFICATION

Inanimate objects are frequently vested with one or more of the attributes of living creatures. Usually it is little more than such little touches as giving the wind the

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[22] *These People*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[24] *The Mountain in the Sky*, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[25] *These People*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

ability to hear,[28] death acting as an individual,[29] or giving the moon hair to become entangled in a hemlock.[30] In addition to these trivial personifications, Corning occasionally achieves the superb, as when he writes, "With valleys purring, gaunt and lean."[31] The image, almost startling in its originality, arouses a whole chain of reactions. Although it does not actually compare a valley to a cat, it does successfully transfer the attributes of the cat to the valley: a purring valley denotes contentedness, but one that is gaunt and lean also denotes struggle, a lack of abundance that necessitates daily effort to maintain life. The paradox of content and struggle as co-existent in the valleys is made believable when expressed in terms characteristic of the cat. The poet again achieves the sombre quality found frequently in his poems when he writes of the dusk as the herder bringing in the "pensive sheep."[32] The absence of an actual herder adds to the loneliness of the scene which is further enhanced in the lines that follow. The melancholy of death is emphasized again when he speaks of "Thick and

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28 ". . . they tell the wind their tales," Ibid., p. 4.

29 ". . . when death seals my sight," and "Time will put latches on my eyes," Ibid., p. 66.

30 Ibid., p. 3.

31 Ibid., p. 79.

32 Ibid., p. 70.

inattentive shadows" that "snuff the wick" of life.[33] By the word "thick" a sense of oppressiveness is created, by "inattentive" the impersonal, routine function of death is expressed.

SUMMARY

Corning's use of figures of speech is mainly limited to those of simile, metaphor, and personification. His weaker figures are more than counterbalanced by excellent images. Those not drawn from the common, universal elements of the world are derived from the Oregon scene. Although the characteristics of Oregon are not so exclusive that they are not found elsewhere where similar topography and climatic conditions exist, the cumulative effect of Corning's reliance upon the Oregon locale for his imagery is such that even when he writes of abstractions as he does in "Time Is a Spade,"[34] the reader feels it is Oregon soil on which the spade is tapping--or, if unfamiliar with Oregon, that it is the soil of a limited terrain.

Corning's images express conventional ideas in sufficiently novel from to give pleasure to a reader, but on the whole they fail to stimulate thought or evaluate the issues

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[33] Ibid., p. 66.

[34] Ibid., p. 80.

of life. Their pictorial quality is high, but their power of revelation is low, a fault not of the images but of the ideas which they are used to express.

CHAPTER IV

DICTION AND ALLUSION

Diction and allusion are properly part of a poet's imagery. They have been given separate consideration in this thesis because the poet's choice of words presents a problem in addition to that of imagery, and his use of allusion is such that it can best be considered as a part of his diction.

DICTION

It is surprising that the ordinary speech of the region is so little reflected in the poetry, which derives its imagery from the Oregon scene. Even colloquial words and phrases, which might add to the feeling of authenticity of the poems as reflections of Oregon life, are, for the most part, absent. Even in the speech of individuals in the poems, the colloquial element seldom appears. The result is at times a certain aloofness of the poem from its setting, an artificiality that weakens the illusion of reality. It is in the poems contained in <u>These People</u>, the first published collection, that the dichotomy between the thing expressed and the means of expression is most noticeable.

When Corning writes that there is no overtaking the belief of the pioneers in "transientness of everything save

hills,"[1] the incompatibility between the words used and the words that would have been spoken by a typical pioneer to express the same idea holds the poem on a level that precludes an emotional sympathy with the writer's concept of the pioneer spirit. Admittedly it would have been less poetic to have written, "Shucks, ya can't tell me anything in this world lasts--'cept maybe these here hills," but a compromise in the choice of words, the use of a more usual word in place of "transientness," for example, might have helped to lessen the distance between the concept and the expression of it.

Again, in telling of his thoughts while cutting grass in a graveyard, Corning comments on the danger of nicking his scythe blade on a tombstone by saying, "And I may not know best to stop/ My scythe before a tombstone's top/ Intrudes and nicks my blade a bit."[2] The attribution to the tombstone of the power to intrude is unnatural. "Unnoticed" substituted for "intrudes and" would meet the technical requirements of the line and convey the intended meaning less self-consciously.

Any poet has, of course, an inalienable right to choose whatever he believes to be the word best suited to convey his intended meaning. By the same token, however, he is liable to criticism when his choice of words is such that the

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[1] These People, op. cit., p. 4.

[2] Ibid., p. 6.

reality or emotional impact of his poetry suffers, for the reader, because of that choice. Perhaps the outstanding example of diction inappropriate to the subject is found in "The Redemption of Satan,"[3] the tale of a boozer's accidental conversion to Christianity by the sudden appearance of his handy man, who bears a striking resemblance to the conventional conception of Christ. The story itself is simple, yet it is couched in language of great elegance. The tone of the poem is set in the opening lines:

> There might have been less of tale than this to tell
> Had there been fewer ciphers following
> The maximum summing of credulity.[4]

Corning's development of the narrative is sufficiently skilful to make MacPherson's sudden conversion credible, and the initial disarming of the reader by the abstract image of credulity measured in extensive ciphers is excessively lofty. The elevation of tone is preserved throughout the poem, including the dialogue of the simple, rustic characters, forcing the reader out of the story and diminishing the likelihood of an empathic response. The reader knows the sequence of events, but he has not been permitted, he feels, to share in the emotional development.

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[3] Ibid., pp. 14-21.

[4] Ibid., p. 14.

Not every poem in *These People* suffers to the same extent from the early weakness of the poet for the less commonplace word. Frequently a poem loses little from such usage except, perhaps, the earthiness that would increase the realism. In "Flame and Water,"[5] for example, the use of such words as "cenotaph," "consecration," and "frequenting" where "empty tomb," "dedication," and "visiting" would have served as well, detracts not one jot from the meaning although the homlier words, it must be admitted, would tend to bring the poem closer to the actual experiences of the average reader. If the original words were in original contexts that carried new and penetrating connotations, no fault could be found in their use. They are, however, employed in perfectly usual contexts that deprive them of any distinction except that of being alien to common usage. The result is a lack of reality that diminishes the emotional reaction of the reader as well as a flavoring of erudition that is not altogether pleasing.

This tendency toward a sesquipedalian style becomes less and less obvious in successive poems, although it is to a limited extent found in both volumes. Significant, however, is the fact that the use of unusual words in *The Mountain in the Sky* is generally good. The use of such phrases

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

as "febrile traceries" in reference to the outlines of the branches of trees contrasted against the sky, "gibbous moon," and "amorphous shadows" illustrate this increased felicity in the choice of words.[6] In addition, such usages are sufficiently rare in the second volume so that the reader does not become conditioned against them through over-exposure, which he is likely to do in These People.

Another trend discernible in Corning's poetry, that of using specific words rather than vague, general terms, is quickly obvious if the title poems of both volumes, which deal with the spirit of the pioneer, are compared. "These People" has no link with the details that entered into the daily lives of the pioneers; "The Mountain in the Sky" is full of them: "feet battered by stones," "the creak of leather," "the grind of ox-cart wheels," the wind, the sage, and the desert.[7] The former poem succeeds in establishing an appreciation for the pioneer's endurance, but the latter poem permits the reader to share some of the pioneer's experiences through its concrete references.

Some of the poems found in These People are so vague in their references that only a general, undefined reaction is produced in the reader, a reaction so general that it

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[6] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 90.

[7] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

evokes neither an emotional nor an intellectual response. Typical of such poems is "Such Things."[8] The only concrete references are to "potter's row," "clanking-to of iron gates," "rutted snow," and "warming grates." The other references are to John Edom, an individual not further identified, the coming of the Lord, and "they" and "things" without clarifying antecedents. Several other poems are similarly vague and fail to give the reader sufficient clues to the intended meaning with the result that he can do little more than sense an atmosphere.[9] Perhaps it might be argued that these poems convey all that their composer intended, but a consideration of the poems in The Mountain in the Sky which successfully communicate their writer's perception of the ephemeral moments of life, and do so without undertones hinting at other, less obvious meanings,[10] incline this writer to believe that the earlier poems unsuccessfully try to say something more profound than is discernible in their lines.

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[8] These People, op. cit., p. 5.

[9] Ibid.; "Sampson," p. 8; "Mardigan's Demise," p. 12; "Crowned," p. 52; "Truth," p. 65; and "Lad David," p. 79.

[10] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit.; "A Drift of Oregon Bluejays," p. 7; "Momentary Mountain," p. 27; "Mountain Nightfall," p. 28; "On Cedars Dammed Across a River's Course," p. 52; "Wilderness Dayfall," p. 53; "Winter Solstice," p. 55; "Rider to Hounds: Night," p. 90; "Storm Before Daybreak," p. 91; "August Pool," p. 99; "Autumn Bird," p. 102; "Hands that Gather Gold," p. 103.

Poetic language, that is, words that have come to be commonly accepted as intrinsicly poetic, such as "denizens," "twain," "vestments," "swain," "naught," "lest," and "withal," are found scattered throughout These People, but not with such frequency that they become offensive to the reader. In "Advent,"[11] such words are found in the greatest concentration, but there they are contrasted against such words as "gaunt," "gnaw," "whine," and "swart," and help to achieve a contrast that is effective. It is true that such words are sometimes used where more rugged diction might have been more forceful, as, for example, in "These People," where "wood-denizens," "atangle," "myriad," and "lief," are used in connection with the pioneers.[12]

More pronounced is Corning's preference for compound words such as "sun-up," "precipice-edge," "fire-fingered," "logic-worse," "over-sotted," and "blanket-rolled" which sometimes seem a bit strained, perhaps, but more frequently function as vivid, highly-connotative language. These compounds are scattered throughout both volumes, an indication of Corning's continued faith in their effectiveness.

The Mountain in the Sky, although on the whole still aloof from colloquial speech, avoids pretension and attains

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[11] These People, op. cit., pp. 10-13.

[12] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

an over-all genuineness of expression infrequently achieved in the earlier poems. Even though Corning at times still uses language not indigenous to his locale, there exists an integration between idea and expression.

One of the best single indications of Corning's increasing confidence in his skill is to be found in "Return of Two Natives."[13] Written in free verse, a form that permits the most natural flow of language, it contains a verisimilitude to life not found in the first volume. In the dialogue are found such colloquialisms as "old gent," "flubbed," [went insane], "He went all bats," "cracked" [insane], and "which was a caution" [unusual occurrence]. The harmony between the setting and the language adds much to the effectiveness of the poem.

ALLUSION

In general, Corning's allusions are seldom used to connote more than a general concept that would be as precisely expressed by a common noun. They seldom make the reader recall a significant past experience that might increase the immediate poetic experience.

The most frequent allusions are to the planets and constellations, allusions that function mainly on the level

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[13] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., pp. 63-71.

of ornamentation. "Beneath the dogs of Orion," "Across the form of Circe," "The gleaming spear of Vega," and "the tipsy spark/ Of Orion"[14] do have meaning for one versed in the constellations, but for the general reader they are little more than references to a star-filled sky. The poem is effective, but not because of associations recalled as a result of allusion to specific constellations.

Similarly there are references to local Oregon terrain, such as "Hermit's Range," "Devil's Prong," "The Verge," "The Springs," allusions which emphasize the ruggedness of the country by the nature of their names.[15] Their effectiveness derives from the poetic implication found in them, an implication that is more suggestive than description might be.

Corning's literary allusions are of small significance. In "Foot Sleep,"[16] he refers to Shelley, Keats, Poe, Shakspere, and Milton. Wordsworth, Rimbaud, Caedmon, or Francois Villon would have served as well, except that their names are less suitable to the meter; the only requirement of the poem is that the names be of dead poets who by virtue of being dead are equal with kings or beggars. In "Truth,"[17]

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[14] Ibid., p. 56.

[15] These People, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

[16] Ibid., p. 68.

[17] Ibid., p. 65.

Corning alludes to the Colossus as indicative of the stature of man and describes him as "Dante flamed." Both allusions are among the most successful, but the former is marred by a feminine plural ending instead of the correct masculine plural /Colossae instead of Colossi/, an instance of the poet's overreaching himself. The latter allusion is especially effective, the linking of "Dante" with "flamed" assuring the reader's recollection of the hell depicted by Dante in his Divine Comedy.

Biblical allusions are also among the more successful; the references to Golgotha, Jordan, Galilee, Calvary, and the resurrection are quite appropriate to a tale of conversion.[18] A few poems are based upon Biblical passages, utilizing those associations to the full. "Transplantation" states that Adam would not find life so hard if he could grow another Eden from the core of the one he threw away.[19] "Pruning Vines"[20] strongly recalls the parable of the fig tree,[21] in which the owner of the vineyard directs that unless pruning restores the tree to productivity it must be cut down.

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[18] Ibid., "The Redemption of Satan," pp. 14-21.

[19] Ibid., p. 49.

[20] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 8.

[21] Luke: 13: 6-9.

SUMMARY

Corning's metamorphosis of the Oregon scene into poetry is marred by an absence of language indigenous to the locale and by the presence of language on an artificial, elevated level that creates a gap between the expression and the thing expressed and weakens the reality. In the later poems, however, a marked tendency toward colloquial speech is clear, an indication of Corning's awareness of that defect in his earlier writing and an increasing confidence in his ability to write poetry that is valid because of what it says rather than how it says it.

Allusion is a minor element, usually less effective as a means of evoking a recollection of pertinent past experience or knowledge in the reader than as a stimulant to the imagination by its own poetic nature. In other words, Corning's allusions function more as descriptive words than as true allusions.

CHAPTER V

SUBJECT MATTER AND PHILOSOPHY

Corning is preoccupied with the subjects of birth, death, the painful futility of the span between those poles of existence, and nature. He writes narrative and lyrical verse, both strongly flavored with the atmosphere of Oregon. The former retells local legends, sometimes with a footnote giving the historical background. The latter range from descriptive pieces that attempt nothing more than the presentation of a scene or a mood to more ambitious lyrics which express some truth about man's existence.

BIRTH

Corning does not speculate on the phenomenon of birth, but regards it simply as the beginning of existence. It is impersonal[1] and significant only as the start of the pain of living which ends only in death[2] unless alleviation is found in spiritual grace.[3]

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1 "Time sinks its spade and up you come to birth," These People, op. cit., p. 30.

2 "How certainly each dusty atom reaps/ Its birth, waylaid between two timeless sleeps!" ibid., p. 30.

3 "Who takes to heart infinity rescinds/ The ache of birth in the quieting of death," ibid., p. 70.

DEATH

Corning finds in the subject of death much more to interest him than he finds in the subject of birth. He frequently speculates on the subject of death in its several aspects. Its inevitability is always recognized,[4] but its meaning is variously interpreted. At times the poet looks upon death as a welcome rest after the labor and pain of life,[5] as the beginning of wisdom,[6] as merely a part of the multiple life processes of the earth,[7] and the great equalizer under whose hand princes and paupers, poets and kings are reduced to a common level.[8]

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[4] "Death's door . . . will not stand ajar," These People, op. cit., p. 37. See also in the same volume: "Shackled," p. 50, and "Only the Blue," p. 66; and in Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., "The Last Hound," p. 106.

[5] "And rest like a friend--/ And a long sleep to go," Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 98. See also in the same volume: "Farewell to Fields," p. 107; and in These People, op. cit.: "Acquisition," p. 82; "Children of Grace," pp. 53-54.

[6] "Death makes him wiser than he was," These People, op. cit., p. 72. See also in the same volume, "Elegy for a Mountain Boy," pp. 55-57.

[7] This attitude is expounded at length in "The Ballad of Abraham's Bosom," These People, op. cit., pp. 26-28. See also "Mowing Graveyard," pp. 6-7; and "Frosty Graveyard," Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 105.

[8] See "Poet Sleep," These People, p. 68, and "Landlord," p. 51.

Corning also finds inspiration in these universal symbols of death in civilized society: the graveyard and the tombstone.[9] These poems do not shed any further light on Corning's philosophy of death, but they do contain a satiric note against man's vanity that prompts him to set up meaningless monuments which serve the needs of neither the living nor the dead.

LIFE

Corning treats the subject of life in three distinct ways. First, he has written what might be termed biographical poems, poems, that is, which seek to perpetuate in verse legends about historical figures of the West or about individuals whose exploits, while not so well known or famous as those of historical personages, nevertheless furnish him an inspiration for poetic speculation. Second, he has written several poems which deal not with the lives of individuals but with what he considers the important characteristics of two classes of people: the mountain men who explored the West and the pioneers who settled the West. Third, he has written several lyrical observations on the painful elements of life, elements common to all men. Pain in varying degrees

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[9] *These People*, *op. cit.*: "Mowing Graveyard," pp. 6-7; "Stony Christ," p. 47; and "Reading Epitaphs," p. 67. *Mountain in the Sky*, *op. cit.*: "Of a Gravestone Cast in Hauling," p. 104; and "Frosty Graveyard," p. 105.

and manifestations, ranging from specific pains caused by given sets of circumstances to subtle manifestations of melancholy and nostalgia, is characteristic of Corning's poetry.

These poems which deal with actual persons and events of Northwest history, three in number, are grouped together under the heading of "Three Historical Documents" in The Mountain in the Sky. Each of these poems is followed by a note giving the historical data upon which the poem is based.[10]

The reader of these poems soon becomes familiar with the names of many individuals who have no historical significance, among which the most prominent are those of "Satan" MacPherson, Eulana Snow, "Mitchell's Come," Jason Wynne, and Ballantine Harvey. They appear most prominently in the narrative poems, but they are also found in some of the lyrics. They always remain individual men and women, and achieve importance through the stories in which they figure or through their characteristic weaknesses.[11] They are not used as symbols to represent certain, well-defined concepts.

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[10] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit.: "Nails for a Calf," pp. 15-16; "Willamette Portage," pp. 17-18; and "Joaquin Miller Crosses the Mountains," pp. 19-23.

[11] Ballantine Harvey is a drunkard; Jason Wynne is a miser.

It is in his poems about the pioneers and mountain men that Corning achieves some of his most effective lyrics. The title poems of both his published volumes deal with the pioneer spirit. He is particularly successful in conveying the exhilaration these people derive from their close contact with the wilderness in spite of physical danger and discomfort:

> They do not count the mountains that they climb,
> Where mountains are a green surge in their blood;
> . . . . . .
> They drink from earth the sinews of their might.[12]

> They are never still;
> They are inebriates,
> Drinking space as they will.[13]

> For after all, it's the exultation
> Of climbing for things we never reach;[14]

> That always the dream burns first,
> Whether poet or pioneer;
> For the mountain that rose out of thirst
> Has completed a hemisphere.[15]

> Prairies go free. But mountain dwellers share
> The strength of granite struggle; long alone,
> They bend the lightning till their bodies wear
> The earth's hard sinew. They cleave stone with stone.
> And through the shadows weighing on their hearts
> The sky is answered and a new world starts.[16]

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[12] "These People," These People, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

[13] "Mountain Men," ibid., p. 31.

[14] "Mardigan's Son," ibid., p. 35.

[15] "The Mountain in the Sky," Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

[16] "Mountain Dwellers," ibid., p. 51.

The poet's main preoccupation with life, however, is that of pain; not physical pain, but the pain of disappointment, frustration, and labor. Unhappy or broken marriages,[17] frustrated love or ambition,[18] the sheer pain of existence,[19] and the pain of memories[20] are his most prominent themes, recurring time and again throughout both volumes. Even nature, the subject of his most tranquil poems, is not free from the power to inflict pain. The poet finds the sea, in particular, terrifying in its mystery:

> I shall go back to the immemorial forests,
> To the bearded cedars wise in their shadowed seclusions
> To be at the end the echo of their anthem.
> Too soon the waves of another sea will reach me--
> Reach me with granite waves that will cover me surely
> And gather me back to the sands that dreamed and
> spawned me.[21]

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[17] These People, op. cit.: "Flame and Water," p. 9; "Song Has Wings," p. 29; "Sonnets of a Discontented Wife," pp. 32-33; Mountain in the Sky, op. cit.: "Six Curtains," pp. 77-79; "Sagebrusher's Wife," p. 100.

[18] These People, op. cit.: "The Warrior," p. 36; "Three Sons," pp. 38-40; "Autumnal Gesture," p. 48; "Transplantation," p. 49; "Harbored," p. 69; "Sonnet," p. 70; Knowledge," p. 71; "Indictment," p. 75; "The Proudest Heart," p. 76; Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., "Candary's Door," pp. 61-62.

[19] These People, op. cit.: "Need," p. 46; Mountain in the Sky, op. cit.: "Pruning Vines," p. 8; "Solitary Boatman," p. 47; and "A Proud Man Walks in the Desert," p. 101.

[20] These People, op. cit.: "Spring's Plowshare," p. 78; "White Famine," p. 81; The Mountain in the Sky, op. cit.: "The Swamp Shack," p. 54.

[21] "Full Tide at Sunset," Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., pp. 42-44.

> . . . climb, till the floors
> Of space are lifted and the sea appears . . .
> And there leap out into the taking darkness.[22]

When he thinks of the sea, it is in terms of death; he even speaks of the mountains which he loves as though at his death they will be a thundering ocean of granite.

Nature also causes pain by its ephemeral nature, tantalising the thirst for beauty by never retaining its moods and seasons long enough for the heart to have its fill,[23] by its ruthless grinding out of the seasons and life cycles,[24] and by presenting unanswerable situations.[25] In one poem Corning goes so far as to make one grand negation of all the beautiful in nature, declaring all life that is not pain is illusion:

> Illusion makes the flesh a worshipper
> Of the earth's vagaries the heart can press.
> Let no heart's beating tell him he is bound
> With the dissevering filament of pain,
> And that the thread of pity's ache is wound
> Into the hour's yielding, grain by grain.[26]

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[22] "Song To Say Farewell," ibid., p. 37.

[23] Mountain in the Sky, op. cit.; "August Pool," p. 99; "Hands that Gather Gold," p. 103.

[24] Ibid.; "River Tree," p. 9; "Northwest Passage," pp. 45-46; "Chant for the Brethren of Dust," pp. 73-74.

[25] Ibid.; "White Burial," p. 41; "Full Tide at Sunset," p. 42; "Minnow Spring," pp. 87-89; "Mount Tabor," p. 111; "Kinsmen of the Lark," p. 112.

[26] "Worshipper Man," These People, op. cit., p. 43.

NATURE

Although Corning finds much in nature to make him puzzle and to give him pain, he also finds in nature wisdom and beauty. While reading his poetry, one is never aware of the existence of cities, factories, slums, or commerce except as a vague evil that stifles man's soul and drives him back to the untrammeled wilderness where cupidity is unknown.

Many of the poems are preoccupied solely with a description of nature in various moods. Corning's ability to crystalize the ephemeral moment in all its beauty and mystery is responsible for some of his most successful poems. It is also in these verses that his most exquisite and most poignant imagery is found:

> Now comes the rain's intimate swift
> Fingers, and now comes
> The phantasmal blue drift
> Of heaven in crumbs [27]

Significant in regard to Corning's development as a poet is the fact that the best of these poems are found in the second volume.

Nature does have more meaning for the poet than the prettiness of pictures or the beauty of moods, however, for he is much concerned with the significance of nature to man.

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[27] "A Drift of Oregon Bluejays," Mountain in the Sky, op. cit., p. 7. See also in the same volume: "Fire in Summer," p. 10; "Mountain Nightfall," p. 28; "Autumn Bird," p. 102.

He is consistent in his belief that for the man close to nature books are "alphabetical conundrums" and that the greatest satisfaction is to be found in "truth in script across the sky."[28]

SUMMARY

Corning is concerned with the phenomenon of birth only insofar as it marks the beginning of existence; and, although he wonders at the meaning of death, he has arrived at no single answer to its significance that satisfies him. In spite of the fact that he finds in nature and life much that is beautiful and pleasant, he also finds much that is painful and cause for wonder. His sensuous impressions are pleasant but his cerebral impressions are full of the pain of questioning.

He has never achieved a philosophy of life and death satisfying to him, and as a result his poems that probe into the significance of nature are full of his search for truth but do not contain a revelation or a discovery of truth. His poems dealing with the mountain men and pioneers are an affirmation of the satisfactions of life, but they are a medium of escape into the dead past and avoid immediate problems of existence.

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[28] "Rustic," These People, op. cit., p. 45. See also in the same volume: "Crowned," p. 52; and Mountain in the Sky, op. cit.: "Green Councillors," p. 85; "A Mountain Boy Reads Spinoza," p. 83; "Handspan," p. 11.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Although Corning lived during his youth in Ohio and did not settle in Oregon until he was twenty-three years of age, he has successfully captured in his poetry the spirit and atmosphere of his adopted state. His images reflect the vigor and vastness of the great spaces of the Pacific Northwest, especially in their concrete reference to the characteristic mountains and hills, rivers and streams, forests and other uncultivated vegetation of that sparsely settled land.

It is strange that his poetry reflects the Oregon scene in its imagery but not in its form. When the wildness of his settings is considered, it is difficult to understand how the lack of discipline in nature failed to be reflected in free verse, a form much more in harmony with the poet's themes and settings. The poet's technical skill in those forms he uses is, however, more than competent. His poetry remains effective even though it is not allowed the freedom of expression that frequently seems to be called for.

Corning's imagery is excellent. It reveals great sensitivity to external impressions and a rare ability to reflect those impressions in language. Its few lapses into

the commonplace are more than redeemed by its general fresh and vivid expression.

The poet's weakest point is his diction, which is frequently in the earlier poems on an elevated level not in harmony with the theme and setting. Whether or not it is a reflection of over-compensation on the part of the poet for his lack of formal education, there is a marked tendency for it to become, in his later verse, less artificial and more in keeping with the atmosphere of the poetry itself.

Although Corning has never found a basic philosophy that would give his poetry a uniform and consistent expression, it is full of his search for truth. He is often concerned with beauty and pain, a concern that he expresses frequently and effectively in his poetry. His retelling of local legends is always delightful and reflects his interest in and love for the Oregon scene.

The poet's evolution as an artist is well illustrated in the poems contained in his two volumes. Those elements designated as faults are more pronounced in the earliest poems and become less and less in evidence in the later poems. Not all poems suffer simultaneously or to the same degree from the artist's defects, and the proportion of good poetry is higher than this discussion might indicate. All the poems except those which are too vague to make a definite impression on the reader (and they are few in number) succeed, to some

extent at least, in spite of their faults, and many of them achieve the superb. Corning frequently interprets the life of his region in terms that have meaning and validity for all men.

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APPENDIX A

SONNETS

I. Shakesperian Sonnets

These People

1. -2. "Flame and Water," (2 sonnets), p. 9.
3. "Waylaid," p. 30.
4. "Ballantine Harvey," p. 34.
5. "Worshipper Man," p. 43.
6. "Mardigan's Demise," p. 44.
7. "Need," p. 46.
8. "Stony Christ," p. 47.
9. "Only the Blue," p. 66.
10. "Sonnet," p. 70.
11. "Knowledge," p. 71.
12. "Lost Lad," p. 77.

Mountain in the Sky

13. "Mountain Dwellers," p. 51.
14. -17. "Six Curtains" (4 sonnets), pp. 77-79.
18. "A Mountain Boy Reads Spinoza," p. 86.
19. "Rainbow Lands," p. 95.
20. "Sagebrusher's Wife," p. 100.
21. "Frosty Graveyard," p. 105.
22. "Kinsman of the Lark," p. 112.

II. Other Sonnets

	Title	Rime Scheme
These People		
1. -2.	"Sonnets of a Discontented Wife" (2 sonnets), pp. 32-33.	abbaabba cdecde abbaabba cddeee
3.	"Song Has Wings," p. 29	abbacded efefgg
4.	"The Warrior," p. 36.	abbaabba cdecde
5.	"Rustic," p. 45.	abbacdde efeggf
6.	"Autumnal Gesture," p. 48.	abbaedde efefgg

	Title	Rime Scheme
7.	"Truth," p. 65.	abbaeddc effegg
8.	"Harbored," p. 69.	ababcdcd efefef
9.	"The Proudest Heart," p. 76.	ababcdcd efegfg
10.	"Time Is a Spade," p. 80.	abbaeddc efefgg
	Mountain in the Sky	
11.	"Pruning Vines," p. 8.	abbaeddc effegg
12.	"Song to Say Farewell," p. 37.	abbaeddc efgfge
13.	"On Cedars Dammed Across a River's Course," p. 52.	ababcdcd efgefg
14.	"The Last Hound," p. 106.	abbaabba cddeee
15.	"Mount Tabor," p. 111.	abbaabba cddeee

APPENDIX B

FOUR-LINE STANZAS

I. Poems in which the four line stanza riming abab is found:

	Title	Meter
	These People	
1.	"These People," pp. 3-4.	Pentameter
2.	"Such Things," p. 5.	Tetrameter
3.	"Sampson," p. 6.	Tetrameter
4.	"Ballad of Abraham's Bosom," pp. 26-28.	Tetrameter
5.	"Doors," p. 37.	Tetrameter
6.	"Transplantation," p. 49.	Tetrameter
7.	"Shackled," p. 50.	Tetrameter
8.	"Landlord," p. 51.	Tetrameter
9.	"Crowned," p. 52.	Tetrameter
10.	"Children of Grace," pp. 53-54.	Tetrameter
11.	"Reading Epitaphs," p. 67.	Tetrameter
12.	"Poet Sleep," p. 68.	Tetrameter
13.	"Wind Words," pp. 73-74.	Tetrameter
14.	"Indictment," p. 75.	Tetrameter
15.	"Spring's Plowshare," p. 78.	Tetrameter
16.	"Lad David," p. 79.	Tetrameter
17.	"Acquisition," p. 82.	Tetrameter
	Mountain in the Sky	
18.	"Mountain in the Sky," pp. 3-4.	Trimeter
19.	"A Drift of Oregon Bluejays," p. 7.	Irregular
20.	"River Tree," p. 9.	Alternating tetrameter & dimeter
21.	"Firs in Summer," p. 10.	Irregular
22.	"Handspan," p. 11.	Dimeter
23.	"Momentary Mountain," p. 27.	Pentameter
24.	"Mountain Nightfall," p. 28.	Irregular
25.	"Solitary Boatman," p. 47.	Irregular
26.	"The Swamp Shack," p. 54.	Pentameter
27.	"Winter Solstice," p. 55.	Pentameter
28.	"The Dark Friends," pp. 80-82.	Tetrameter
29.	"Green Councillors," p. 85.	Three trimeter lines followed by a dimeter line

	Title	Meter
30.	"Storm Before Daybreak," p. 91.	Pentameter
31.	"August Pool," p. 99.	Alternating tetrameter & trimeter
32.	"Autumn Bird," p. 102.	Pentameter
33.	"Of a Gravestone Cast in Hauling," p. 104	Irregular
34.	"Farewell to Fields," p. 107	Three pentameter lines followed by one dimeter

II. Poems in which the four-line stanza riming other than abab is found:

	Title	Rime	Meter
	These People		
1.	"Reading Epitaphs," p. 67.	aabb	Tetrameter
2.	"Logic," p. 72.	abab	Tetrameter
3.	"Wind Words," pp. 73-74.	abba	Tetrameter
	Mountain in the Sky		
4.	"White Burial," p. 41.	abcb	Dimeter
5.	"Men of the Rock," p. 59.	abba	Pentameter
6.	"Rider to Hounds: Night," p. 90.	abba	Irregular

APPENDIX C

MISCELLANEOUS VERSE FORMS

I. Eight-Line Stanza Riming abababcd:

	Meter
These People	
1. "These People," pp. 3-4.	Pentameter
2. "Eulana Snow," pp. 22-25.	Tetrameter
3. "Mardigan's Son," p. 35.	Tetrameter
4. "Deserted Mining Town," pp. 41-42.	Tetrameter
Mountain in the Sky	
5. "Northwest Passage," pp. 45-46.	Pentameter
6. "Willow Hedge," p. 72.	Pentameter

II. Six-Line Stanza Riming ababab:

These People	
1. "Mountain Men," p. 31.	Irregular
2. "Elegy for a Mountain Boy," pp. 55-57.	Tetrameter

III. Five-Line Stanza Riming ababb:

These People, "Mowing Graveyard," pp. 6-7.	Tetrameter

IV. Seven-Line Stanza Riming abaabab:

Mountain in the Sky, "Chant for the Brethren of Dust," pp. 73-74.	Tetrameter

V. Nine-Line Stanza Riming abaabcdcd:

Mountain in the Sky, "Candary's Door," p. 61.	Tetrameter

VI. Ten-Line Stanza Riming abbaccdabd:

These People, "Three Sons," pp. 38-40.	Tetrameter (with occasional trimeter lines)

VII. Blank Verse:

These People, "The Redemption of Satan," pp. 14-21.

VIII. Free Verse:

These People

1. "Advent," pp. 10-13.
2. "Finding Heaven," pp. 58-64.

Mountain in the Sky

3. "Squirrels in the House of the Night," pp. 29-36.
4. "Full Tide at Sunset," pp. 42-44.
5. "Wilderness Dayfall," p. 55.
6. "Return of Two Natives," pp. 63-71.

IX. Rimed Couplets:

Mountain in the Sky	Meter
1. "Deacon's Dobbin and His Two Paradises, p. 60.	Tetrameter
2. "A Proud Man Walks in the Desert," p. 101.	Tetrameter

X. Poems Undivided into Stanzas:

These People	No. of Lines	No. of Rimes	Meter
1. "White Famine," p. 81	12	6	Tetrameter
Mountain in the Sky			
2. "Hails for a Calf," pp. 15-16.	27	13	Tetrameter
3. "Minnow Spring," pp. 87-89.	60	24	Dimeter
4. "Hands that Gather Gold," p. 103.	7	3	Pentameter

XI. Poems Containing Stanzas of Varied Lengths:*

	Rime	Meter
These People		
1. "Wind Words," pp. 73-74	aabbcc abab** ababb abba** abab** aba abcdedbd	Tetrameter
Mountain in the Sky		
2. "Joaquin Miller Crosses the Mountains," pp. 19-23.	ababcc abaaeb ababcdcd abbacc abbaaedcdefefgghhh ababa ababbaba aabccb ababcdcdeefgfghiijjkkkllmm	Tetrameter
3. "Momentary Mountain," p. 27.	abab cdc defe fghfh /	Pentameter
4. "Storm Before Daybreak," p. 91.	abab cded efef ghg hii //	Pentameter
5. "Hay Harvest," pp. 96-98	Irregular	Irregular

* Does not include poems written in free verse or blank verse, nor those poems which have regular stanzaic forms already listed mixed together, such as "These People," (These People, pp. 3-4) which contains one four-line stanza riming abab following four eight-line stanzas riming ababcdcd.

** See Appendix B.

/ If stanzas were equal, the rime would be abab.

// If stanzas were equal, the rime would be abab plus a couplet.